

Aug 21, 1961 Vol XIII No 22 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter Digest Service-Published 52 weeks a year--\$25 per year

Off Broadway

Fenn and NY agreed to split inheritance tax rights to \$20 million Oscar Hammerstein estate... NYC Mayor Wagner promised League of NY Theatres at Sardi luncheon that he would fight for abolishment of 10% Federal admission tax, after he had secured end of 5% city admission fee.

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DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Red Eye of Love-Provincetown 8/16. Watts, Post, catching up with new play by Arnold Weinstein which opened while he was abroad, approved of avant-garde comedy that entertained him without arousing his all-out critical enthusiasm. Its chief virtue is that the author is always up to something, a firm believer in action for action's sake. Where the other avant garde plays aim their eccentricity of manner at the world about them, Weinstein makes the target of his technique the new drama itself. Thanks to the frequent fun and the excellent staging by John Wulp the proceedings are distinctly worth seeing. Production opened Jun 12 at Living Theatre and drew 3 pros- Herald Tribune, Journal American, Post (Herridge) and 2 cons- Times, World Telegram & Sun.

A Man's A Man- Cambridge, Mass 8/15. Hudson, World Telegram & Sun, approved of Harvard Summer Players presentation of Brecht's play, translated by Eric Bentley, staged by John Hancock at Loeb Drama Center. The play itself is too repetitious, but it has enough point and blood and thunder to be as impressive an example of serious, unmitigated theatrical entertainment as any now existing on an American stage. The performers fared well, especially Maggie Ziskind and Theodore Kazanoff.

That Something Extra- ANTA 8/11. Little, Herald Tribune, applauded Oldsmobile dealer show based on "The Pajama Game" score presented in NY for one week prior to national tour. Cast is first class and the plot line is so nicely meshed with the commercials that even a non-partisan audience finds itself cheering models of cars like first act finales. They ought to charge to see the show, drama reporter suggested.

NYC FUTURE CALENDAR

Pirates of Penzance-Phoenix 9/6... Cockeyed Kite-Actors Play 9/13... I Want You- Maidman- 9/14... Happy Days-Cherry Lane 9/17... Misalliance- Sher Sq- 9/19 ... One Way Pendulum- East 74 9/18... Greek Tragedy Theatre-City Center 9/19... Opening of a Window- T. Marquee- 9/20... Ghosts- 4th St 9/21... High Fidelity- Ambassador- 9/25... O Marry Me- Gate 9/25... From the Second City-Royale 9/26... Hi Paisano-York 9/27... 4th Av North-Madison Av 9/27... Thracian Horses- Orpheum 9/27... Purlie Victorious- Cort 9/28... Corn is Green- Masters- 9/30.

Sap of Life- 1 Sher Sq- 10/2... Sail Away- Broadhurst- 10/3... The Caretaker- Lyceum 10/4... Blood, Sweat & Stanley Poole- Morosco 10/5... Clandestine on the Morning Line- 10/5... Let It Ride- O'Neill 10/6... Milk & Honey- Beck 10/10... Everybody Loves Opal-Longacre 10/11 ... How to Succeed- 46th St 10/14... All In Love- 41st St-10/16 ... The Maid's Room- Booth 10/18... Diff'rent- Mermaid- 10/18... A Cook for Mr. General- Playhouse 10/19... Kwamina- 54th St 10/23... Yves Montand-Golden 10/24... Look We've Come Through-Hudson 10/25... The Buskers-Crick 10/25... Write Me a Murder- Belasco 10/26... Gayden-Maidman 10/30... Go Fight City Hall- Mayfair 10/30... Garden of Sweets- ANTA 10/31 ... The Apple- Living 10/? ... Time Gentlemen Please-Strollers -10/?



NYC CRITICS ABROAD

Beyond the Fringe-Fortune-London- 3 NYC reviewers praised topical revue- Watts, Post, Aston, World Telegram & Sun, Crosby, Herald Tribune. All agreed that it will be a big hit when it arrives in NY. Post man rated it rather shabby dog entertainment, being little concerned with sharp and snappy blackouts, but it is brilliant and intelligent fun. WTS' traveling aisle-sitter suggested some adaptive surgery for US audiences but otherwise raved about the screwballs who kept him constantly in laughter. Herald Tribune columnist thinks US needs dose of this kind of humor by four marvelously literate and gifted amateurs.

Ross-Haymarket, London- Aston, WTS, and Crosby, Herald Tribune, enjoyed Michael Bryant, who replaced Alec Guinness in the title role of Terence Rattigan's play about Lawrence of Arabia. Former found himself deeply moved if not completely satisfied by play that has structural difficulties, while latter agreed it was not a very good play but even without Guinness it is very interesting theatre about a very complex and fascinating personality.

Luther- Royal Court, London- Aston, WTS, recommended new John Osborne play that does not reach greatness because of its built-in obligation to recite. Luther the man is hammered into being before our eyes in the artistry and genius of solemn-looking Albert Finney.

Oliver- New, London- Aston, WTS, and Crosby, Herald Tribune, enjoyed new musical based on Dickens' novel. WTS critic, marked it a gratifying solid delight with Keith Hamshire completely endearing in the title role. Herald Tribune man admitted difficulty in understanding the Cockney lyrics, but otherwise greatly enjoyed it. Crosby heard nasty rumor that Fings' Aint Wot They Used To Be musical also due in NY is really in Greek.



INTER- VIEW HI-LITES

GUY LOMBARDO, producer of Paradise Island, cost \$1 million to produce at Jones Beach, NY, Marine Theatre and he will feel he has accomplished something if he breaks even for a 10 week season, he told Viner, World Telegram & Sun. Orchestra leader-restaurant owner is willing to settle for no financial profit because NY State Park Commissioner Robert Moses insisted he stay on as producer. It is also a great satisfaction and thrill to see the 8200 seat amphitheatre filled with people who gape with wonderment at the stage effects. Lombardo expects to present a show for Moses at the 1964 World's Fair.

NUNNALLY JOHNSON told Buchwald, Herald Tribune, in London how he is going about writing his first avant-garde play. He will take a bunch of random scenes from different rejected plays, string them together in any order you happen to have them stacked and before you know it the critics will start comparing you with Beckett, Pinter, Weskett, Ionesco. Also required is a bum, because drama critics like bums in avant garde plays. To help him discover what his play is about, Johnson will read the opening night reviews.



GREEN ROOM DEPARTMENT

POLITICS & TAXES... The many candidates for Mayor of NYC were urged by Times editorial to take a good long look at the \$78-\$120 million additional required next year before they make premature promises about tax reduction without offering substitute taxes to make up the difference. Mayor Wagner's promised repeal of the 5% city admission tax, totalling \$2 million, was a move made in the political season but not necessarily with political motives.

COLUMN TIPS... Rita Hayworth and Gary Merrill may co-star next season in Step on a Crack, hears Hopper, News... Brendan Behan and Tennessee Williams to write a comedy together this winter, notes Farrell, World Telegram & Sun... George Gobel has invested \$10,000 in Let It Ride in which he stars, tips Watt, News

PARADISE FOUND... Probably the closest you can get to finding Paradise on this tired old satellite encircled earth is to see Paradise Island at Jones Beach, NY, Marine Theatre, suggests Mirror editorial. It is a magnificent salute to our 50th state, larger in scope than past Jones Beach shows.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Looking back at last season's 100 or more openings, McClain, Journal American, admits he finds it frequently embarrassing to face up to the polite interrogation of avid theatre buffs. Except for a few strenuous successes the entire remaining scene blurs in retrospect... Watts, Post, has no intention of deserting The Moon Is Blue after the enjoyment it has given him in the past, but he hopes the latest revival will be the last production he is called upon to review for quite a while.

US BARD FESTIVALS... American productions of Shakespeare at Phoenix, Stratford, Conn and Central Park have had to call upon their directors to substitute inventiveness for classic acting style, comments Coleman, Mirror. Though we are grateful to the actors who have worked for small salaries to make it possible to do Shakespeare at all, it hasn't often been Shakespeare at its best. Actors do not master the classic technique in a couple of weeks or even a season.

EVERYBODY'S A CRITIC... Melbourne drama reviewers panned by Vivien Leigh for their notices of the Old Vic production of Duel of Angels. Critics had many errors in spelling and in identifying characters. Audience was panned for being gloomiest she ever saw at a first night, "Stage" reports.

RETURN OF ANNA... "A Star is Torn" is title suggested for the scripted feud between Carnival producer David Merrick and Anna Maria Alberghetti by Burden, Post. Understudy Anita Gillette sent the returned star roses (real), while Merrick for-warded roses (plastic) and a bearded character offering a "lie-detector" test. Alberghetti was ready with a two page press release after her performance explaining point by point her position. Gillette wrote McHarry, News, that it was Merrick who decided to keep her in show after Champion did not think she was right for role.



PROS & CONS BY TMK

Four small Broadway "Off Broadway" playhouses-Maidman, Mayfair, Mermaid, Midway-constructed by Irving Maidman are available for the start of the new season. The first season last year of the two larger theatres-the Maidman and the Mayfair- were flops in every department, and the \$5.75 top made it difficult to convince anyone they were very far "Off Broadway." The two newer and smaller 149 seat theatres might be able to charge lower prices due to slight union concessions. With so many new small play-houses opening this season, the owners must bury their past feuds and form a trade organization that can represent them with the wrongly-named "Fact Finding Committee" of the craft unions. Unless this is done, and done quickly, there will be nothing to halt further increases for just about everyone concerned except the actor and the playwright. The ever loyal "Off Broadway" ticket buying public nurtured on \$1 and \$2 tickets not too many years ago, will soon discover that Broadway is cheaper, better and more convenient.

Theatre ticket buyers, Broadway and Off Broadway varieties, might consider organizing a lobby and fighting City Hall for some rights. Though there has not even been a bill introduced yet in the City Council, Mayor Wagner promises repeal of the 5% city admission tax by Oct 1. The \$2 million involved will not be used to cut ticket prices, but has been okayed for producers' use to pay union pensions. Possibly such a move might win a few votes of producers and stagehands who do not have children in the city schools. Everything being equal it honestly looks like the City of NY government needs the cash more than the theatre does.

Film commitments figured in many news stories in the past weeks. Richard Burton and the film producers of "Cleopatra" paid \$50,000 to release him from Camelot, Anthony Quinn paid a like amount to leave Becket for a film, Leslie Caron closed a London production of Ondine to make a film, and Anna Maria Alberghetti was not able to win a release from Carnival for several weeks to make a film. The film is the thing as far as large salaries are concerned. But the obligation of a star is to fulfill his stage contract. The withdrawal of the leading player often closes the show for good. The life of the actor is hard enough without having to weigh the long range probabilities of the star in his show being enticed by a gold-bearing movie producer. If the star would rather make motion pictures than dabble in the "living theatre", let him stay in Switzerland or Africa or wherever they make films these days.

The American Shakespeare Festival & Academy has gotten carried away by the news of the population explosion. For their post season student performances of Macbeth at Stratford, Conn, at which all tickets are \$2, they are offering a free guest ticket to every adult with 20 students.

All time prize for "Dedication to Duty While Goin' Fishin'" won by Living Theatre's Jim Spicer who composed his press release announcing resumption of repertory at the 14th St & 6th Av playhouse in Greece and mailed it in France.



OUTER
BROADWAY
THEATRE
LETTER

College Theatre

Univ of Redlands, Calif, and Univ of Calif at Berkeley to present Greek Tragedy Theatre prior to NY City Center stop Sept 19... UCLA Extension Theatre Group to present The Iceman Cometh staged by John Houseman with Martin Balsam Aug 25... Univ of Minn Summer Theatre presenting The Copperhead by Augustus Thomas.

Kirk Denmark, Beloit, Wisc, College, who recently directed his 200th production on campus, will do Shaw research in England this fall and return in Feb... Univ of Vermont, Burlington, Champlain Shakespeare Festival third season repertory of Hamlet, Henry V, Much Ado About Nothing, Greg Falls director, continues to Aug 31.

AETA Confab

NYC Mayor Wagner named Aug 23-30 "All American Theatre Week" in honor of AETA convention Aug 24-30 at Waldorf Astoria and National Catholic Theatre Conference Aug 23-26 at Statler Hilton and Sheraton-Atlantic.

Community Theatre

Theatre Atlanta, Inc five play season opens Sept 19 with Heartbreak House, followed by Three Men on a Horse, Mary Stuart, Autumn Garden, The Would Be Gentleman. Beryl Goldberg director.

New Playhouse

New Milwaukee theatre - restaurant-supper club planned by Ray Boyle, former director of Fred Miller Theatre, and James Barrock.

Church Drama

America's Witness for Christ 24th annual Mormon religious drama presented at Palmyra NY attended by 145,000 Aug 2-4, Harold Hansen, Brigham Young Univ, Provo, Utah, director.

Summer Playhouses

Next summer's spectacle at Jones Beach, NY, Marine Theatre to be an original musical about New Orleans by John Jacob Loeb and Carmen Lombardo. Louis Armstrong to star.

Jack Douglas forced to drop out of Teahouse of the August Moon at Salt Creek Playhouse, Hinsdale, Ill due to illness, David Morrison subbed.

Tryouts This Week

Venus at Large new comedy by Henry Denker with Jan Sterling, Lionel Stander at Westport, Conn, Country Playhouse 8/21-27

Song for Small Voices new play by David Marlin Jones at Brad-dock Heights, Md, Playhouse 8/22-27

Sap of Life-new musical by Richard Maltby, Jr-David Shire at Williamstown, Mass. Summer Theatre 8/22-27. (Due at 1 Sheridan Sq Playhouse, NYC-10/2.)

'Toinette new musical version of "The Imaginary Invalid" by J. L. Rodale, music by Dede Meyer at Cecilwood Theatre, Fishkill, NY 8/22-27

A Whiff of Melancholy new drama by James Andrews with Nancy Kelly, Tod Andrews staged by Burgess Meredith at Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, Penn 8/21- 9/2

The Touch of Fear a new mystery play at Boothbay, Maine, Playhouse 8/22-26.

Current Road Tours

Milk & Honey- Shubert, New Haven 8/26.

Sail Away- Colonial, Boston 8/9

Bye Bye Birdie-State Fair, Dallas 8/21

Fiorello!-Biltmore, Los Angeles 8/7

The Miracle Worker - Opera House, Central City, Colo 8/1

Flower Drum Song - Forrest, Philadelphia 7/3.

Road Shows

The Short Happy Life, A. E. Hotchner's play based on Hemingway stories started rehearsal at Hartford Theatre, Los Angeles for pre-Broadway tour starting Sept 12 in Seattle... Leave It to Jane with Kathleen Murray, Dorothy Greener, Ray Tudor opens Sept 5 at Prudential Bldg Auditorium, Chicago.

London

The Kitchen returns to the Royal Court Aug 21 for three week run, and then may move to West End... Luther to move to West End after return from Edinburgh Festival... Ondine dropped from Aldwych repertory because of film commitments of Leslie Caron... Ben Bagley to direct Flora Pascal Strikes Back musical by NY authors Howard Blankman -Paul Rosner.

Shakespeare

Macbeth to be revived Sept 13-Oct 21 for \$2 student performances at Stratford, Conn... As You Like It first production of Woodbridge, NJ, Park Festival of Arts, to be presented Aug 29-30 at Warianco Park, Elizabeth, NJ.

Romeo and Juliet at Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon, featured 23 year old Brian Murray who replaced Pakistan actor Zia Mohyeddin at one week's notice. London critics had many reservations for Peter Hall's direction, but highly praised Murray and Dorothy Tutin.

Africa

Dear Liar with Jerome Kilty and Cavada Humphrey being presented at 170 seat Intimate Theatre, Johannesburg. The Fantasticks will be presented there later this season... The King of the Dark Chamber staged by Krishna Sha to open tour Sept 26 in Durban... Margaret Webster readying tour of A Touch of the Poet.

"CD" digests all theatre material in the 2100 pages of 7 NY daily papers of the preceding week. "CD" subscribers are invited to inquire further for more specific data on current reviews, back reviews and out-of-town tryout reviews via mail, phone or drop by for coffee and facts when in NYC.



